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His gilte heer was coroumed with a sonne,
 In-stede of gold, for hevinesse and wighte;
 Therwith me thoughte his face shoon so brighte
 That wel unnethes mighte I him beholde;
 And in his hande me thoughte I saugh him holde
 Two fyry dartes, as the gledes rede;
 And aungellyke his winges saugh I sprede.
 And al be that men seyn that blind is he,
 Al- gate me thoughte that he mighte wel y-see;
 For sternely on me he gan biholde.

In the first place we note that Boccaccio opens his description (ix, 148^{ro}) with an exposition of the might of the god, "il quale i pazzi (!) antichi, & moderni uogliono, che sia Iddio di gran potere"—in proof of which he adduces Seneca's Hippolytus. "Ne quali uersi," he adds "si dimostra quanto grande sia di lui potenza," whereupon he adduces other authorities.

The description of the dress the god wore is undoubtedly, as Skeat points out, taken from the *Romaunt of the Rose* (see the English version, l. 890). It is in the other details of his appearance that Boccaccio's influence possibly appears—and Apulleius of all people is the ultimate source. Boccaccio quotes the famous description in the Golden Ass, where Psyche looks upon Cupid asleep

"con la chioma della testa d'oro con la tempie latee, con le gote purpuree, con gl' occhi cerulei, con i capelli tutti intricati in un globo, & crespi, che qua, & la pendevano, & uentilavano . . . per gl' homeri d'esso Iddio uolatile le piume biancheggiavano di una luce diuina . . ."

and so on. Is it not possible that in this unblinded god, with his golden hair woven into the semblance of an aureole, and with his wings shining white with a divine splendor, we can see an adumbration of the god of Chaucer's vision? Chaucer places also in his hands

Two fyry dartes, as the gledes rede.

For this, Boccaccio affords no direct equivalent, but what at least may have suggested it. He quotes Seneca's *Octavia* (ix, 148^{ro}).

Finge l'error mortal, ch'amor fia uccello
 Che è così fiero, & dispietato Dio,
 Indi le mane di faette gli orna
 Con l'arco sacro, & con la cruda face.

and he comments (ix, 149^{ro}):

"Viene finto portar l'arco; & le faette . . . Si li aggiunge la face, che dimostra gl' incendi de gl' animi, che con fiamma continua da noia a i prigionieri."

The god who led Alcestis could certainly not carry bow, arrow, and torch as well, but Chaucer can at least symbolize the flame with which he consumes men's souls by making his darts themselves of fire.

Here our comparison may end, for though a number of other passages both in Gower and Chaucer exhibit Boccaccio's influence, the correspondences here noted are all that may be readily discovered in the *Legend of Good Women* and the *House of Fame*. The mention of this latter poem suggests a question—when will the sources of its third book be discovered? That they will be found, there can be but little doubt. It is true there are those who maintain somewhat eagerly that this poem is essentially Chaucer's own, that it is his only 'original' work. This view or method of statement is one to be regretted; it implies that Chaucer lacks originality elsewhere. That view would seem to be the preferable one which Emerson maintained—and with regard to Chaucer himself—that that man is truly original who recreates.

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SOME NEW BOOKS ABOUT SHAKESPEARE.

Die Hamlet Tragödie Shakespeares von RICHARD LOENING. Stuttgart: Verlag der J. G. Cotta'schen Buchhandlung, 1893. 8vo, pp. x, 418.

Shakspeare: Fünf Vorlesungen aus dem Nachlass von Bernard ten Brink, hrsg. von EDUARD SCHRÖDER. Strassburg: Karl J. Trübner, 1893. 8vo, pp. vi, 159.

Shakespeare and His Time: Under Elizabeth, [English Writers, vol. x.] By HENRY MORLEY. London: Cassell & Co., 1893. 8vo, pp. xv, 507.

Führende Geister: Shakspeare. Von ALOIS BRANDL. Dresden: L. Ehlermann, 1894. 8vo, pp. viii, 232.

Shakspeare and His Times: Under James I. [English Writers, vol. xi.] By HENRY MORLEY and W. HALL GRIFFIN. London: 1895. 8vo, pp. xv, 468.

William Shakespeare: 1-10 Lieferung. By GEORGE BRANDES. Paris and Leipzig: Albert Langen, 1895.

PROBABLY no other writer of modern times has so occupied the best thought of the most highly cultured nations for at least one and a half centuries past, as has Shakespeare, the burgher-bard of Avon. His birth-place and those parts of London where he once lived and worked form the Mecca of the literary world. His name and fame are familiar in every land where English literature has found a reader. Thousands of the lovers of literature of all the most highly civilized nations who know not a word of the English language are, nevertheless, thoroughly acquainted with Shakespeare's immortal dramas. His life and works are as intimately known in certain Continental countries of Europe; for example, Germany and Austria, as they are in either England or America. Shakespeare's best and most popular plays are presented on the stage much more frequently during the course of a year in the larger cities of the German empire and in Vienna, than in all the cities of the English speaking world combined. Furthermore, plays like *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Hamlet*, *Richard III*, are more popular among the Germans than the best productions of their own Lessing, Goethe or Schiller.

We are not surprised, therefore, to find books on Shakespeare appearing by the dozen every year in the literature of Germany. *Hamlet* has been for years a most popular and absorbing theme for students and critics in Germany, England and America.

"For close upon three centuries critics and commentators have been explaining and elucidating the greatest tragedy of the greatest dramatist of all time, 'Hamlet, Prince of Denmark.' As it is one of the very longest of Shakespeare's plays, so it is the one into which he seems to have thrown himself with his whole soul. It bears the name of his only son, Hamlet, who died, eleven years old, in 1596. If the sorrow-stricken father wished to perpetuate the name of his son he has succeeded. For among all civilized nations the name of Hamlet has become a symbol of the highest reach of insight into human souls as yet attained by man. More enduring monument father never raised to son."¹ "Würdig

steht er (Hamlet) an der Spitze der Dichtungen, die unter dem Namen der Tragödien bekannt sind und die grossartigsten, gewaltigsten Erzeugnisse der tragischen Muse in aller Litteratur bilden."²

Prof. Loening's *Hamlet-Tragödie* is undoubtedly the most interesting and thorough study of this masterpiece of English literature that has yet appeared. Though a professor of Law in the University of Jena and, as he himself modestly says in the introduction to his book, a *dilettante* in the field of literary criticism, he has, nevertheless, given to the public a splendid specimen of his thorough knowledge of Shakespeare, as well as of English literature in general, and of a most scholarly comprehension of the time-honored *Hamlet* controversy in all its phases. Loening has in the judgment of many of the best Shakespeare scholars, succeeded in clearing up, if not completely, at least more nearly than any one of his predecessors, the life-mystery of Shakespeare's greatest creation.

Loening has arranged the matter of his book in two parts: Part i (pp. 1-142), "Hamlet Criticism in Germany;" Part ii (pp. 143-400), "The Content and Importance of The Hamlet Tragedy." At the end of the book he gives a register of the principal works used and referred to, which in itself furnishes an excellent bibliography of Hamlet literature in Germany, England, and America. In Part i, where German criticism of *Hamlet* is treated historically and chronologically, the author has not only given a list of the more important works on *Hamlet* which have appeared in Germany for the past one hundred years, together with a *résumé* of their contents, but he has also endeavored to put clearly before his readers the various theories of Hamlet's character advanced by different critics, and has usually shown with convincing clearness wherein they have all failed to solve the riddle of his life. The first chapter, The Earliest Representation and Comprehension of *Hamlet* in Germany, is introduced in very striking and forceful language;"³

"The 20th of Sept. 1776 will remain memorable for all time in the history of the German theatre and German literature. On that day a drama of Shakespeare was presented for the

¹ "Shakespeare at Elsinore," by Jón Stefánsson in *Contemp. Rev.*, Jan., 1896.

² ten Brink, *Fünf Vorlesungen*, p. 56.

³ The writer's own translations from the original.

first time on the stage in Hamburg, under the direction and according to the specially prepared edition, of Friedrich Ludwig Schröder. This play was *Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*. The impression which this first representation of *Hamlet* in Hamburg made on the German public, was so powerful and its success so beyond all question, that from that time on the victory of the British poet-genius over the false and unnatural in the poetic taste of the Germans might be considered as decided."

After briefly discussing Lessing's attempts at the introduction of the Shakespearean and English literary taste into Germany instead of the French style, for sometime all-powerful, but already decadent, Loening goes into the details of the earliest presentations of *Hamlet* in Germany, giving especial importance to the influence of the Hamburg performance on German dramatic taste. From this date (Sept. 20, 1776) till the beginning of 1778, *Hamlet* was performed thirty times in Hamburg alone and "admired by full houses." The enthusiasm of Hamburg for Shakespeare and his *Hamlet* soon spread over entire Germany. In the latter part of 1777, *Hamlet* was enthusiastically received by the theatre loving public of Berlin. Early in 1778 it was also played in Gotha, then, in Dresden, etc. Everywhere in Germany *Hamlet* preceded other Shakespearean plays, and not one equaled it in popularity and frequency of representation. Ten plays of Shakespeare were given one hundred and eighty times on the Hamburg stage from 1779 to 1798, and of these seventy-five fall to *Hamlet*, thirty-three to *Lear*, thirty-one to *Merchant of Venice*, etc. (cf. p. 10, note). Though *Hamlet* was from the beginning exceedingly popular in Germany, the form in which it was produced (that is Schröder's version of the text) differed in some very essential points from the original. The changes which Schröder made naturally gave rise to a general misunderstanding of the play and its hero from Shakespeare's point of view. So we find Goethe among the first of the admirers and critics of Shakespeare, who demanded that the drama be presented to the German public in an exact translation of the original. It was, therefore, in great part due to Goethe's efforts to make *Hamlet* accessible and comprehensible to the Germans, that he was led to that thorough study of the

principal character of the play, which enabled him to direct and control, so to speak, all *Hamlet* criticism from his day to the present time. Goethe was the founder of the modern school of *Hamlet* critics, and his well-known theory of Hamlet's character as given in *Wilhelm Meister* (iv, 3, 13), has been virtually that of nearly all the most important critics of the last one hundred years. The real burden of Loening's work is to prove beyond a doubt that Goethe's idea of Hamlet, and consequently that of his successors in the field of Shakespeare criticism, is in its essentials false. He shows, moreover, wherein the well-known theory of Werder fails properly to account for the mystery of Hamlet's life. In refuting these and all other attempted explanations of Hamlet's character, the author gradually and clearly works out his own solution. We shall attempt to give in brief the essentials of Loening's theory, commencing with his statement and explanation of Goethe's theory. The remaining chapters of the book, in which other theories and the various phases of the play are ably discussed, will thus be left undisturbed to the enjoyment of each reader. Every one, who is at all interested in Shakespeare's master-piece, and wishes to see for himself the gist of the best that has been written on *Hamlet* for a century, should not fail to read Loening's book.

According to Loening (cf. p. 19) Goethe regarded Hamlet's hesitancy as not merely temporary, but lasting, that the revenge finally taken was wrenched from him only by the force of circumstances. As a congenial poet, he felt, therefore, that the cause for Hamlet's conduct could only lie in a lasting, inborn bias of his character,—only in his natural disposition. In this admission lies, says Loening, the point and essential significance of Goethe's conception of Hamlet. In emphasizing the importance of the conflict between Hamlet's *naturelle* and the task that had been imposed upon him, Goethe undoubtedly struck a true note. And he also correctly recognized that the key to this conflict is contained in Hamlet's words at the close of Act i. But, unfortunately, the true meaning of these words escaped him, as well as all later German critics, as a result of inexact translation. He gave to these words a col-

oring and importance which the original does not contain, and he drew from them correspondingly incorrect conclusions. The two lines in question are :

"The time is out of joint: O cursed spite,
That ever I was born to set it right!"

The determining words, Loening goes on to say, are: *O cursed spite*, and these are incorrectly rendered by Goethe through *Wehe mir*; they really mean: *O verwünschter Aerger*, or *O verfluchte Widerwärtigkeit*; they are the expression of an inner disinclination for the imposed task, and not the sighing complaint of a soul that has been loaded with too heavy a burden, and which feels that it will succumb to the same. Expression is given in those words, "O cursed spite," not to a tragic feeling, but to a peevish, irritable disposition. Hamlet does not cry "*woe!*" (*wehe*) about himself, but he *curse*s the task that has been laid upon him (*die ihm gestellte Aufgabe verwünscht er*, p. 20). At the same time the bitter, harsh expressions, in which this feeling asserts itself, show that it is in this case not a question of a tender, delicate, weak sentimentality, but of a very energetic, active feeling on the part of Hamlet. This points further to the fact that, on the whole, the picture which Goethe has sketched of Hamlet's character—but more especially, that side of it in which he discovered the ground of his hesitancy—does not harmonize with that which the poet (Shakespeare) evidently intended.

The author proceeds in this (3rd) chapter to show how Hamlet on various occasions gave the strongest evidence of energetic and manly courage, and also that a further point against the Goethe conception is to be seen in Hamlet's actions with reference to the duty which had been forced upon him. Had a lack of energetic action in reality hindered Hamlet from the accomplishment of the deed, nevertheless, urged on by the feeling of duty, he would have exerted himself to the utmost to overcome the obstacle of his *naturelle*, and to arrive at the end and aim of his task. He would, at least have had to form, even if only temporarily, an honestly intended resolution to earnestly take the fulfilment of the revenge in hand. In a word, Hamlet would have had to manifest the will and inclination to accom-

plish the task. He would have had to fix his eye on this, even if without any settled plan, nevertheless as an end. Now the play furnishes a number of expressions and acts of Hamlet, which, at first sight, might be taken for just such intentions and attempts; for example, the assumption of the rôle of a madman, the presentation of the play before the king, the impulse to kill the praying king, the killing of Polonius, whom he apparently considered the king,⁴ and several expressions in the soliloquies which seemed to indicate the forming of a resolution. Goethe appears, in fact, to have taken these actions and expressions in such a sense, when he speaks of Hamlet's "vacillating melancholy," his "active irresolution" (*Wilh. Meist.* v, 6; iv, 13; v, 4). All who before, or since Goethe, have written on Hamlet, have likewise shared this conception, which, says Loening, is incorrect. Not only this view, but almost all those that have thus far been expressed must be discarded. *In truth Hamlet is never for a moment, during the entire course of the dramatic action, until immediately before the close, earnestly determined to take upon himself the carrying out of the revenge. He does not form a vigorous resolution, and he does not, until the final catastrophe, undertake a single act with the intention, that it shall in any way serve him in the accomplishment of the revenge.* He not only has no plan for exacting vengeance, but revenge is not his aim. This is a cardinal point for the understanding of the piece.

Having thus (in Chap. ii) clearly stated Goethe's theory of Hamlet's character and at the same time pointed out its defects, Loening devotes the remainder of Part i to the discussion and elucidation of the various theories which critics, since Goethe's time, have attempted to establish. One by one, he takes them up and refutes them in such a logical and convincing way, that one finally wonders what direction the author's own theory will take. Space will not permit our going further into the details of the interesting discussions of Part i. It remains to say a few words in further explanation of Loening's conception of Hamlet's character, as stated very elabo-

⁴ Cf. on this point an exceedingly interesting article, "Shakespeare at Elsinore," by Jon Stefansson.

rately in the first chapters of Part ii. As a very fitting transition from the discussions of the first part of the book to those of the second, the author has in Chapter ix summed up the results and conclusions to which he has been led by a careful consideration of the German *Hamlet* criticism, stating the real problem from his own standpoint and giving a forecast of the method of argumentation pursued in Part ii.

Chapter ix bears the title: "Hamlet an Unsolved Riddle; Attacks upon its Artistic Value. *Sursum Corda!*"

If we cast a glance, he says (p. 132), at the Hamlet criticism in Germany, as we have presented it to the reader in the preceding chapters, the result is anything but satisfactory. After the tragedy of the English poet had been freed from the crudest disfigurements by Goethe's artistic judgment and the way paved to a correct knowledge, the work of a century has been devoted to giving to the nation a clear understanding of this artistic production. However, as we have seen, they have not only not succeeded in reaching their end by proceeding along the path struck out by Goethe, but all their attempts to approach the same along other ways must be considered as complete failures. Indeed one may say: the more criticism has deviated from Goethe's standpoint, the farther it has wandered from the immanent spirit of the poem,—yea, from the spirit of all true poetry; the more it has involved itself in contradiction with itself and with poetry in general, the more it has degenerated into inartistic fancyings. And the most recent attempts at explanation are, in general, only calculated to call forth ridicule and satire. Thus up to the present day Hamlet's character has not been explained, the motives for his demeanor, the consistency of the dramatic action, the tragic idea of the piece, have not yet been clearly understood. Hamlet is still, as in Goethe's time, an unsolved riddle.

The insufficiency of their explanations has often enough been felt to a greater or less degree by the critics themselves. Evidence of this has presented itself to us in the fact, that, in order to maintain their own explanations, they have declared the hero to be wholly, or, at least, half crazy (cf. p. 49 f.;

67 f.). The validity of this feeling is further shown by the fact, that the critics were frequently forced to acknowledge, that there is, in spite of all explanation, an inexplicable residue, as well in the character of the hero as in the consistency of the dramatic action,—a secret, mysterious obscurity or half-obscurity, in which the profoundest principles of the tragedy lie concealed. However, they have tried to discover just here an especial æsthetic excellence of the play, a peculiarity conditioned by its collective character, a cause of its attractiveness, and indeed of its wonderful truthfulness to nature. They claim the poet wished to create a mystery, such as the life of man itself offers, and just as nature envelops the final causes of things in an impenetrable veil.

To be sure, life offers much that is secret and mysterious to him who stands in the midst of it, and who does not understand himself perfectly, and studies the phenomena about him only from separate sides, without being able to entirely comprehend their connection. The poet who wishes to give in his productions an image of life cannot, therefore, with propriety allow such a mystery to rule within the world created by himself,—mystery especially for the people of this world. But for the poet himself, for the creator of this world, there can be nothing secret and mysterious in it. He knows and directs everything, and there is nothing in it, which does not issue from him. And as the poet himself stands outside of and over the world as created by himself, so he must bring the hearer and reader also to his standpoint. For inexplicable mysteries and unfathomable secrets there is, therefore, absolutely no place in an artistic dramatic work which really deserves the name; and of that, such a master of the dramatic art as our poet, was conscious.

"Shakespeare," says Goethe,⁵ "follows the *Weltgeist*; he interpenetrates the world, as the *Weltgeist*: to both there is nothing concealed; but if it is the business of the *Weltgeist* to keep secrets before,—indeed often, after the deed, then it is the desire of the poet to divulge the secret, and to make confidantes of us before, or at any rate during the act. . . . The secret must out, even if the stones are to reveal it."

And does not the poet himself cause his Ham-

⁵ Cf. Aufsatz, *Shakespeare und kein Ende*, I.

let to say to the actors (iii, 2): "The players cannot keep counsel, they'll tell all?"

On the other hand, there are secrets of nature, which no one, not even the poet, can penetrate. However, the critics have falsely appealed to this principle in order to justify the supposed mysterious element in our tragedy. We do not at all have to deal here with such unsearchable secrets of nature, with the final causes of things; but that which has remained mysterious to criticism, has reference to the constitution of human characters and the motives of human actions: things which for the poet, who is ever to be found in the inner constitution of his characters, can and dare not be a secret, if his characters are to count for real human beings. If, however, in our tragedy the final, mysterious questions about existence *are* now and then touched upon, these questions do not constitute the unsolvable subject of the piece, but the subject of consideration of individual persons of the same, and they serve solely for the characterization of these persons.

We shall, therefore, in the mean while hold fast to the belief, that we have before us in *Hamlet*, in spite of all, a great and real tragedy; that the supposed contradictions and obscurities rest upon misunderstandings; and that the fault is in ourselves, if plan and idea of the piece have thus far remained hidden to us.

The first three chapters of Part ii are given up to a thorough analysis, both psychological and physiological, of Hamlet's character. In Chap. x the author considers what to him are the three determining features of the hero's character: (1) Hamlet's melancholy temperament; (2) The choleric element in Hamlet, (3) Hamlet's disposition and moral character. Suffice it to say, without going into the minutiae of Loening's most thorough and searching analysis, that he finds the grounds for Hamlet's delay in executing vengeance for his father's death in the first two of these characteristic elements; namely, in his melancholy temperament and choleric disposition. In the author's careful examination of Hamlet's temperament both from the physiological and psychological side, we are made to see more clearly than ever how all the critics of the past

have misunderstood the true character of Shakespeare's great creation. Loening shows by a large number of quotations from the play, that Shakespeare really intended to delineate a melancholy character in the person of Hamlet.

In discussing the physical feature of Hamlet's disposition or temperament, and what importance the melancholy temperament of a man may have in a practical way, and what influence it exercises over the volitions and actions, he says, among other things (p. 157), "The temperament rests on the physical condition, on the corporeal constitution of man; and this it is which determines the influence of temperament upon action. This is fully recognized in Shakespeare's works and given its full value. All of his psychology rests upon a physiological basis. . . . Shakespeare considers the *blood* to be that component of the bodily organism, which preeminently determines human feeling. From the blood proceed, according to Shakespeare, all the feelings, inclinations, desires and motives. For him the blood is the special source and seat of the passions, and he, therefore, frequently employs the word "blood" in the designation of the affections of the soul. Balanced against the blood—nature, the sensitive faculty,—stands the brain, reason or judgment, that is, the sum of the mental and moral forces in man, through which he is enabled to check and control the desires and passions of the blood. . . . And it may easily be shown how the whole tragic plan of our poet rests upon this contrast between blood and judgment, between nature and reason. It depends on the condition of the blood how and what the man feels, what inclinations and disinclinations—whether motives to, or hindrances of action—arise in him."

Of the physical peculiarities which evidence a melancholy disposition, Loening emphasizes especially Hamlet's stoutness or rather fatness. When Hamlet compares the dissimilarity between his uncle and father, with that between himself and Hercules,⁶ he evidently refers, as Loening rightly says, to the *inner* characteristics of the two men,—the contrast between the noble and the common. And there is no good reason for assuming with most critics that Hamlet means here his own insignificance in strength and size of body as compared with Hercules (p. 177 f.).

6 Cf. Act i, 2: "But no more like my father than I to Hercules."

Hamlet evidently lacked, under ordinary circumstances, the strength and durability necessary for great physical exertion, and the poet has given certain hints which point directly to this as a fact. Especially to be considered here are Hamlet's utterances in i, 4, where Horatio will prevent him from following the ghost, and he shouts in the highest pitch of excitement:

"My fate cries out;
And makes each petty artery in this body,
As hardy as the Nemean lion's nerve;"

and in i, 5 after the ghost has vanished, he says:

"Hold, hold, my heart;
And you, my sinews, grow not instant old,
But bear me stiffly up.—Remember thee!
Ay, thou poor Ghost, while memory holds a seat
In this distracted globe."⁷

The first utterance shows how Hamlet experiences a strengthening or tension of his internal organs from the momentary impulse of exceedingly exciting impressions; the second how, with the removal or abating of the exciting impressions, the feeling of strength gradually vanishes, and a sort of relaxation and exhaustion comes over him, as if he had suddenly grown old. The queen, who is thoroughly acquainted with the *naturelle* of her son, speaks to the point in v, 1, at the grave of Ophelia, where Hamlet falls into a vehement quarrel with Laertes:

"This is mere madness;
And thus awhile the fit will work on him;
Anon, as patient as the female dove,
When that her golden couplets are disclosed,
His silence will sit drooping."

This passage has reference principally to the excitability of Hamlet's inner nature, but at the same time, the words "his silence will sit drooping" show that the relaxation of this excitement rests on physical exhaustion (p. 179).

Still another and more important characteristic of Hamlet in this connection is his much discussed and debated "fatness" and "scantiness of breath." Whoever will read carefully what Loening says on this point (pp. 180-182), together with the references in the play itself, can no longer doubt that Shakespeare meant exactly the words he puts into the mouth of the queen, v, 2; "Hee's fat and

scant of breath," which expression is contained both in the second Quarto of 1604, and in the first Folio of 1623.⁸ It is rather strange that some critics and actors, in the face of the undoubted authority given to the word "fat" by the fact of its occurrence in two of the three earliest editions of *Hamlet*, persist in reading and speaking "He's *faint* and scant of breath." Had Mr. Beerbohm Tree read these few pages of Loening's book, he would hardly have said: "I take it that Shakespeare wrote '*Our son is faint* and scant of breath,' and so it is spoken on our stage,"⁹ and then have attempted to prove from the following dialogue between the King, Queen and Laertes that "faint" is correct, whereas the same dialogue can be much more forcibly used to show that the word could be nothing else but "fat." The most recent conjecture for the poet's own word is "flat," while "faint" and "hot" have been going the rounds in Shakespeare literature for years (cf. p. 180, n. 59). That Hamlet was "fat"—not so much bulk of body, as internal fatness, "fatness of the heart" is most probably the proper conception of the prince—we are lead to believe by several references to his daily habits and customs, which occur in the play itself. In ii, 2, Polonius says to the king:

"You know, sometimes he walks for hours together
Here in the lobby,"

and the Queen in affirmation,

"So he does indeed."

And in v, 2, Hamlet says to the king: "Sir, I will walk here in the hall: if it please his Majesty, 'tis the breathing-time of day with me." Then we are informed in ii, 2 and v, 2, that he is accustomed to take regular fencing exercises. And the very regularity of the recreations points to the fact, that they are intended to give the necessary exercise without especial exertion to a man who, on account of his quiet manner of life, is inclined to stoutness (cf. p. 182).

Other characteristics which point to the melancholy temperament of Hamlet are his tendency to Fatalism, and the making known

⁸ Cf. Shakespeare Reprints. *Hamlet* ed. by Wilhelm Viëtor, Ph. D., Marburg, 1891.

⁹ Cf. "Hamlet—From an Actor's Prompt Book," *Fortnightly Review*, Dec. '95.

⁷ Quoted from Hudson's *Hamlet*.

of his sorrows and displeasure to those about him—not by complaining, but by harsh judgment of whatever pains or injures him. Moreover his desire to be alone and his frequent soliloquizing and tendency to ironical expressions, are universal characteristics of the melancholy man or woman.

Hamlet is, however, not to be considered the "hero of thought," "the prince of speculative philosophy," the "digging" student who is only at home in the sphere of the intellect (cf. pp. 188-9). He is, in fact, not at all the pure thinker, philosopher, or scholar, as most critics have considered him. Hamlet is *thoughtful*, but his thinking never has reference to purely abstract, intellectual matters, but exclusively to real phenomena. He does not speculate about the final causes of all existence, about the mysteries of the universe, but he halts in the face of these questions. When he speaks of the "to be, or not to be" in the famous soliloquy, iii, 1, that is not philosophising, but simply the expression of his sad, ironical disposition; and when he asks "in that sleep of death what dreams may come," he does not thereby wish to make an examination of this question, but he wishes solely to indicate the reason why philosophers have so little fear of death. The dreams themselves are to him the things "that we know not of," and he makes no attempt to press the question further. His utterances on this point have nothing whatever to do with philosophic, abstract thinking, as has been so frequently asserted. Hamlet's mind is not consistent and methodical in its thinking, does not firmly retain matters in question, until their causes have been sought out; but it delights in changing the subject of consideration, and springs easily from one subject to another. The great instability of his mind and his easily excitable imagination, only permit him to follow each object in thought until it is forced out again by new impressions. Above all, Hamlet's method of thought is—in opposition to all philosophy—wholly under the influence of his *naturelle*, his natural inclinations and disinclinations, which even force the understanding to find such causes as are likely to satisfy it and drown the voice of reason. Least of all is Hamlet a scholastic philosopher. He speaks of philosophy in only two places: i, 5, he says to

Horatio, in reference to the latter's astonishment at the subterranean voice of the ghost, "There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy." The other passage is in ii, 2, where, in speaking of the fickleness of man to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, he uses the words: "'Sblood, there is something in this more than natural, if philosophy could find it out."

Thus in refuting the Goethean idea that Hamlet was too much of a *thinker* and philosopher, to be an energetic man of action, Loening has shown quite conclusively that the real cause of his inaction is to be found in his *naturelle*, especially in his melancholy temperament and choleric disposition. In commenting on the peculiar characteristics of Hamlet's nature, in the second of a series of articles on "Hamlet and Robert Essex,"¹⁰ Hermann Conrad speaks in terms of the highest praise of Loening's splendid work, though he does not agree with him fully in his detailed analysis of the hero's *naturelle*.¹¹ And no higher praise could be found than a paragraph from a review of Loening's work by the celebrated philosopher and critic, Kuno Fischer,¹² which we give here in the original:

"In seinem unlängst veröffentlichten Werk hat Richard Loening umfassender, gründlicher, in das Ganze und jeden seiner Theile eindringender, als es vor ihm geschehen ist, diese Fragen zu lösen versucht. Der sehr beträchtliche Umfang des Werkes, die Fülle des darin enthaltenen wohlgeordneten Materials zeigt, dass wir es mit der Frucht mehrjähriger Studien zu thun haben. Schon dadurch ist der Verfasser, gelehrter Jurist von Fach und Beruf, gegen den Vorwurf des Dilettantismus geschützt, wie er es auch in der Vorrede mit dem berechtigten Bewusstsein seiner Arbeit und Forschung selbst ausspricht. Es hat übrigens noch nie einem Werke zum Nachtheile gereicht, wenn es aus der freiesten, von allem Berufszwange unabhängigen Neigung entsprungen ist. Dies gilt von dem Loening'schen Buch. Das selbe ist mit einer so geordneten und übersichtliche Sachkenntniss geschrieben, dass es zwar nicht den beabsichtigten, aber keineswegs unwichtigen Nebenzweck

¹⁰ *Preussische Jahrbücher*, Juli, 1895.

¹¹ Cf. *Preuss. Jahrb.*, p. 107.

¹² "Ein neues werk über Hamlet und das Hamlet-Problem" in *der Beilage zur Münchner Allgemeinen Zeitung* for 1894. Nos. 57, 58, 60.

erfüllt, zugleich ein brauchbares Repertorium der Hamlet Literatur zu sein."¹³

A well-known German professor and English philologist remarked one day, just after the appearance of ten Brink's *Fünf Vorlesungen über Shakspeare*, in the course of a lecture on Shakespeare, that this little book contained the only things worth remembering that had ever been said about the great English bard. While this remark may justly be considered an exaggeration by Shakespeare students, it is nevertheless true that every sentence in the book is well worth remembering by all lovers of the literary and esthetic beauties of Shakespeare's language. No one else has written so valuable an estimate of the man and his work in so few words. It is, at the same time, an interesting biography and an inspiring literary criticism. Strange to say, in spite of the fact that Shakespeare was ever ten Brink's special favorite in the field of literature, he had no other opportunity of saying and showing to the world how much he loved him and his works, than in these five lectures, which he delivered before some institute in Frankfurt a. M., in the months of February and March, 1888. Up to the day of his untimely and most unfortunate death in 1891, he was too exclusively occupied with the earlier periods of English literature, especially with Chaucer and his time, to devote much of his attention to Shakespeare, and his excellent *History of English Literature* was completed about to the close of the fifteenth century.

The present little volume contains these five essays as delivered in Frankfurt, together with a likeness of ten Brink, and a short introduction by Prof. Edward Schroeder of Marburg, who arranged the matter for publication after the death of the author. No attempt will be made here to criticise the matter of the essays, but they are herewith most enthusiastically recommended to the careful reading of every student and lover of Shakespeare. An English translation of the book was published by Henry Holt & Co. in 1895.

Not long after the death of ten Brink in Ger-

¹³ Since the above was written, Fischer has published a large volume on *Hamlet*; *Kleine Schriften*. 5. *Shakespeare's Hamlet* von Kuno Fischer. Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1896. 8vo. pp. 329. In this study he discusses Loening's views at length.

many, England also suffered the loss of one of her most interesting and enthusiastic historians of English literature in the person of Prof. Henry Morley. In vol. x of his *English Writers*, he has given to the world an exceedingly readable and valuable biography of that part of Shakespeare's life which fell under the reign of Elizabeth. He has not only brought together here all the available facts and current legends about the poet's comparatively unknown private life, but he has more especially attempted to give us a true conception of the time in which Shakespeare lived and worked. Morley gives, moreover, a sort of literary biography of all Shakespeare's contemporaries, who were in any way connected with the great poet's life and works. We get here, as probably nowhere else, a clear idea of how much Shakespeare was really indebted to the influence of English contemporary literature; we are made to see just how he utilized scenes, events, and characters of men like Peele, Greene, Nash, Marlowe, Kyd, and a host of others in the re-working and writing of the dramas that bear his own name.

Vol. xi of the *English Writers* series was left incomplete by Morley. We are informed by the editor of the book, Prof. W. Hall Griffin, in his preface, that Morley had completed the first eight chapters, and that chapters ix-xiii only needed arranging and a few corrections, while the last chapter (xiv) was written entirely by Prof. Griffin. After this the editor has given a list of all the authorities used or referred to in the book. This bibliographical list extends through about one hundred pages, and to this is added a very convenient index.

This volume which bears the title: "Shakespeare and His Time: Under James I," is simply a continuation of vol. x. In it the later years of the poet's life are treated in the same interesting, comparative way, as the earlier ones had been. And the contemporaries of Shakespeare's last days claim especial attention.

Prof. Brandl has produced an exceedingly interesting hand-book on Shakespeare, published as vol. vi, in the series of *Führende Geister*. Though the book was written for the German reading public, American and Eng-

lish students will find in it a vast deal of interest and importance. The poet's life history is well given as far as it has any basis in known facts, but theories founded on doubtful legends find no place in this estimate of Brandl. Following somewhat in the line of Dowden in his *Shakespeare Primer* and his *Shakespeare: His Life, Art and Mind*, Brandl divides the active literary life of the poet into convenient periods, each period taking its name from the most important play or class of writings, that appear in it. For instance, after the first two periods, which the author very fitly names the *Stratford Jugendjahre* and the *Londoner Lehrjahre* respectively, in the latter of which Shakespeare's earliest productions of whatever sort are discussed, we have: the *Falstaff-Periode*, the *Hamlet-Periode*, the *Lear-Periode*, and the *Romanzen*. Under the period in which each play is considered, is a brief description of the origin and sources of the play, together with the dates of the different editions of the same. One also finds here, written very concisely, the author's own esthetic and literary estimate of the more important characters of the various productions. At the end of the work an appendix is added, in which the books of most importance to the Shakespeare student are given, and the especial merits of each are indicated by a few words.

The most recent work on Shakespeare, and the one which, at the same time, promises the most thorough and attractive consideration of the poet from a literary and esthetic point of view, is from the pen of the noted Danish critic and *litterateur*, George Brandes. The work bears the simple title *William Shakespeare*, and is appearing¹⁴ in instalments from the press of Albert Langen, Paris and Leipzig. There are to be about a dozen of these instalments, of which ten have already appeared, each containing eighty pages. Brandes's special merit in this work is his establishing more nearly than has yet been done, the chronological order of Shakespeare's productions. He attempts also to trace the life of the poet as man, and his genius as writer in gradual stages of development in the works themselves. While directing his at-

tention to the interesting historical development of the man and poet, he introduces incidentally, as it were, the most beautiful and charming descriptions of Shakespeare's individual characters. Brandes's discussions of these various characters contain all the finer esthetic estimates, which are to be found in Gervinus, Hudson, or Dowden, combined with the data necessary to give the most satisfying picture of the world's great poet.

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GERMAN LITERATURE.

Aufsätze über Märchen und Volkslieder von REINHOLD KÖHLER. Aus seinem handschriftlichen Nachlass herausgegeben von JOHANNES BOLTE und ERICH SCHMIDT. Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1894. 8vo, pp. 152.

JOHANNES BOLTE and Erich Schmidt have taken upon themselves the grateful task of editing six essays on folklore by Reinhold Köhler. They were originally lectures, or rather, as the editors put it, "schlichte vergleichende Mitteilungen," delivered before the *Mittwochs- or Schlüsselverein* at Weimar. As only the first has ever been printed before,¹ the book is most welcome. The editors have added notes and references, and we find by way of introduction to the whole work a sympathetic essay on Köhler by Erich Schmidt.² As Köhler's work has proved so important to folklore, I may be pardoned for mentioning the main facts of Schmidt's introduction.

Köhler was born in Weimar in 1830 and died there in 1892 as *Oberbibliothekar*. His simple and uneventful life was entirely devoted to scholarship. At the university he studied philology under Diez, Hand, Hoffmann (the Orientalist), and others. He cannot be said to have had a great constructive mind, but by his editions, his reviews, his short essays, he made himself felt in many different branches of philological work, especially in folklore. He was originally a classical philologist, then did valuable work in German literature (on Les-

¹ Cf. *Weimarische Beiträge zur Litteratur und Kunst*, 1865.

² See, too, Schmidt's remarks on him in the *Goethe-Jahrbuch*, xiv, 297.

¹⁴ Since the above was written Brandes's work has been completed.